

7 December 1953

MEMORANDUM FOR: CIA Member, USCIB Intelligence Committee

SUBJECT: Survey of Alerting Procedure in Intelligence, USCIB 13/357

1. In accordance with agenda item 9.2/2, 90th meeting of USCIB, 11 September 1953, the COMINT portion of subject survey has been segregated from the collateral portion. The following is submitted to enable you to report progress to the Intelligence Committee at its next meeting.

2. The fact-finding phase of the survey has been completed through interviews with the COMINT elements of each IAC agency, and with NSA. As directed by USCIB, the survey has been confined to the handling of critical information within the continental United States.

3. Conclusions and recommendations are now being drafted concerning the collateral portion, and it is anticipated that similar drafting will be undertaken regarding the COMINT portion after the collateral aspects have been completed.

4. A preliminary review of the facts on the collateral side indicates that all IAC agencies are well aware of the need for and their responsibilities connected with the prompt handling of critical and important information in Washington. Although existing collateral sources of critical and important intelligence are exploited, the facts indicate that inadequate mechanisms exist to assure that collateral information [redacted] gets promptly into intelligence channels. Communications channels in Washington are probably adequate for the prompt transmission of readily recognizable critical items, but are insufficient to permit the secure prompt exchange of ideas in any volume. The full-time watch officer procedure at NSA, Air Defense Command, and CIA is desirable. However, watch officers are, in the main, not substantively informed to the extent that they can exercise independent judgment, and they have no central indications mechanism to which they can appeal in the event of uncertainty.

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5. I would like to stress that the above represents very tentative and incomplete findings in the collateral field, and should not be construed as representing the final determinations emanating from the above referenced survey. Further, these conclusions may well be found to be peculiar to the collateral field and specifically not applicable to COMINT.

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